

VA Green Routine Toolkit

Version 1.0

VA Green Routine



Green Routine Program

Green Management Program Service

Office of Asset Enterprise Management (OAEM)

Questions?

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Contents

What is Green Routine?	3
Why Green Routine?	3
Opportunities for Recognition	3
Who is Involved?	4
Green Management Program (GMP)	4
Facility Sustainability Officers (FSOs)	4
Already Innovating?	5
How to Get Started	5
Option 1: Learn from others	5
Option 2: Create an Original Initiative	5
Support from the Green Management Program (GMP)	5
Appendix: Project Guides	5

What is Green Routine?

Green Routine is a program to encourage sustainability-related innovation at your workplace. Any effort at your workplace to improve sustainability and VA services is a Green Routine initiative. These projects can cover a wide variety of areas with benefits coming from enhanced services, more efficient processes, reduced hazards, etc.

Some examples of previous Green Routine Initiatives include:

- Alternative approaches to snow removal, that reduced environmental impact while making the facility safer for our Veterans and ourselves.
- Switching to a paperless process that improved VA employee efficiency, reduced resource use, and reduced costs
- Updating cleaning processes which reduced risk of slipping and cross-contamination, while reducing water and chemical use

These projects have not only improved VA services, but they've already enhanced VA's sustainability, from reducing paper consumption, to reducing salt use, to reducing chemical use. Many more examples of Green Routine projects can be found at our [Green Routine Awards page](#).

Why Green Routine?

The Green Routine program creates a new avenue for you to improve the lives of Veterans in the short and long term, through projects that will improve VA with immediate results, but also improve VA's impact on the environment, particularly in the communities where your facility operates.

Beyond the benefits to services for Veterans and sustainability, participating in Green Routine is an opportunity to lead the way as innovators and early adopters of best practices at your facility. Innovators will have the opportunity to share their experiences for the benefit of others and see their results multiplied as other employees follow in their footsteps. Furthermore, there are numerous recognition opportunities for employees and facilities participating in these efforts, with details listed below.

Opportunities for Recognition

Practice Greenhealth Awards

In 2015, VA won 21 Practice Greenhealth Awards, increasing from 9 in 2014. Two medical centers were named in the top 25 hospitals nationally. If VA can win 40 awards in 2016, VA would achieve an enterprise level award. VHA training is planned for this fall for those preparing nominations for their facilities. Learn more about these awards at <https://practicegreenhealth.org/awards>

VA Sustainability Achievement Awards

This is an internal award opportunity for individuals to be recognized for excellence in their role as a professional, usually in the fields of energy, environment, or transportation. Learn more at <http://www.green.va.gov/awards/index.asp>

VA Green Routine Awards

This is an internal award opportunity for individuals to be recognized for a grassroots initiative that is beyond the scope of their job duties, an initiative that they took on of their own accord. Learn more at <http://www.green.va.gov/awards/index.asp>

Federal Energy and Water Management Awards

The FEMP Awards program is highly competitive for innovative energy and water efforts in the federal government. Learn more at <http://energy.gov/eere/femp/federal-energy-and-water-management-awards>

GreenGov Presidential Awards

This is a Presidential Award for energy and environmental achievements. As noted on WhiteHouse.gov, “They honor Federal civilian and military personnel, agency teams, agency projects and facilities, and agency programs that exemplify President Obama's charge to lead by example towards a clean energy economy.” Learn more at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/greengov/presidential-awards>

Federal Green Challenge

Through the EPA Sustainable Materials Management Program, Federal Green Challenge gives participants an opportunity to set goals for key areas for improvement. Awards are given at the regional and national level for achievement in these different areas. Learn more at <http://www.epa.gov/federalgreenchallenge/awards/index.html>

Who is Involved?

Green Management Program (GMP)

Involvement in Green Routine includes:

- Supporting the Green Routine Program
- Management of the Sustainability Achievement and VA Green Routine awards
- Tracking project achievements, creating project guides
- Communicating with Facility Sustainability Officers
- Assisting with new project development, leaders spreading best practices, and award applicants

Facility Sustainability Officers (FSOs)

Facility Sustainability Officers are meant to be the facility level equivalent to the agency-level Chief Sustainability Officer. Newly designated as of July 2015, they are leaders at each facility who will

encourage and mentor local sustainability efforts. Key information will be provided to the FSO's by the Green Management Program regarding sustainability opportunities and achievements.

Already Innovating?

Green Routine is seeking champions - individuals who have succeeded in an initiative and are interested in helping others make similar changes. These leaders will share more information about their process and success, as well as provide assistance to others who are interested in replicating their results. Green Routine champions have the opportunity to multiply their results many times over. Individuals who begin in 2015 have an opportunity for recognition through VA's Green Routine Awards. These awards will recognize excellence in leading others to replicate successes. Anyone interested in becoming a champion should email greenva@va.gov and include a brief description of their grassroots efforts to date or ideas for the future.

How to Get Started

Option 1: Learn from others

The most straightforward way to accomplish a successful Green Routine initiative is to model your efforts on a project that has already been a success. These successes will be outlined in the "Project Guide" appendices. Project champions are encouraged, however, to pursue any initiative that is most important to themselves and their facility, for the benefit of the mission and sustainability, regardless of whether anything similar has ever been done. Steps on creating an original initiative are included below.

Option 2: Create an Original Initiative

The critical steps to change an organization have been developed from FEMP's Institutional Change Team and they have posted many useful resources on their website at <http://energy.gov/eere/femp/institutional-change-sustainability>

Key steps include involving the key stakeholders in setting a goal (which relates to mission and sustainability), assessing the local context of people, requirements, and resources related to reaching the goal, and determining a path forward.

Support from the Green Management Program (GMP)

Contact GMP to see how we may be able to assist you as you navigate the process of innovating at your facility by emailing greenva@va.gov

Appendix: Project Guides

Project guides are in development. Contact greenva@va.gov if you are looking for relevant best practices.